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The Sunning of America: Migration to the Sunbelt

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The Sunning of America: Migration to the Sunbelt

By Jeanne C. Biggar

Abstract—With birth rates down in all regions, the continuing movement to the West of migrants within the United States and the reversal of the historic outflow from the South, particularly after 1970, have been the main factors in the rapid population growth of the 15 "Sunbelt" states within those two regions from 61 million (about a third of the U.S. total population) in 1970 to 85 million (40 percent of the total) in 1977. This *Bulletin* examines the main streams these recent migrants have followed; their characteristics compared to those of the general U.S. population, people already living in the Sunbelt, and migrants to or within the Snowbelt; the factors which have attracted both industry and people to the Sunbelt; and the benefits and problems for the communities at the receiving end. Although the new influx has helped bring the South in particular more in line with the rest of the nation economically and politically, the rapid growth carries with it the threat of central city-suburban racial segregation hitherto unknown in the Sunbelt and strains on the environment, housing, transportation, schools, facilities for the aged, and other services which planners must balance successfully against new demands for lower tax burdens if the Sunbelt states are to "continue to provide the quality of living which the new migrants seek to enjoy."

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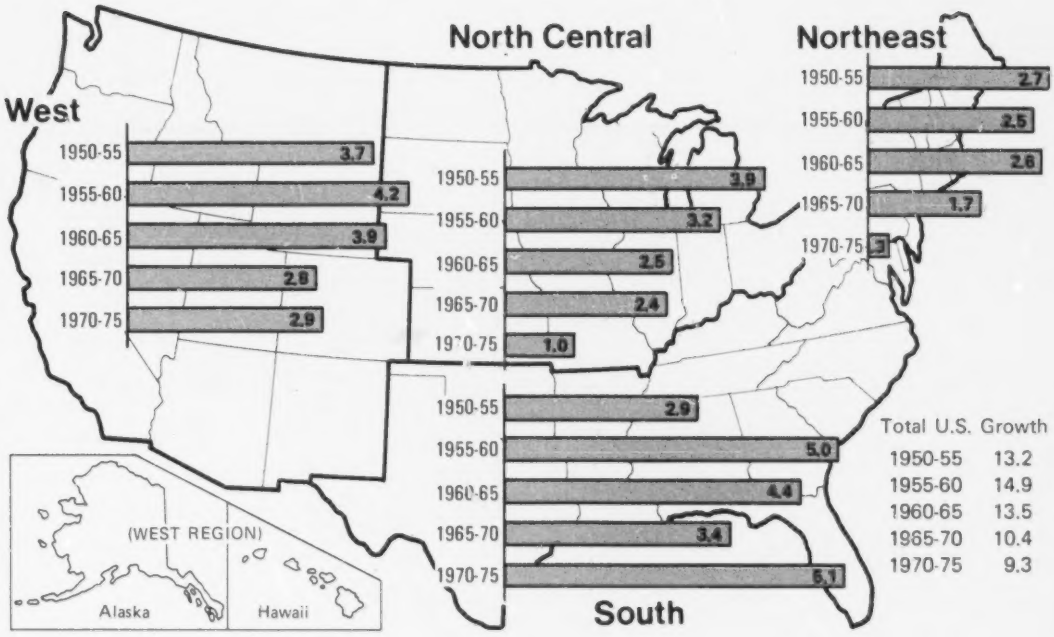
Figure 1. Population Growth in the Four U.S. Regions: 1950-1975

(Numbers in millions)



Components of the Population Change

(Numbers in millions)

Period	Natural increase[a]					Net migration[b]				
	United States	Region				United States	Region			
		North-east	North Central	South	West		North-east	North Central	South	West
1950-55	12.1	2.3	3.5	4.5	1.9	1.0	0.4	0.4	-1.6	1.9
1955-60	13.2	2.6	3.9	4.7	2.2	1.7	0.0	-0.7	0.3	2.0
1960-65	12.0	2.3	3.3	4.2	2.2	1.5	0.3	-0.8	0.3	1.7
1965-70	8.7	1.6	2.3	3.0	1.7	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.1
1970-75	6.8	1.0	1.8	2.5	1.5	2.5	-0.7	-0.8	2.6	1.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Estimates of the Population of States with Components of Change: 1970 to 1975," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 640, November 1976, cover chart and Table B.

[a] Births minus deaths.

[b] Balance between in-migration and out-migration.

The Sunning of America: Migration to the Sunbelt

By **Jeanne C. Biggar**
University of Virginia

"There are men dressed in traditional wide-brimmed hats, tooled boots and other clothing detailed with a western flair. But mostly they're decked out in spiffy new leisure suits, white shoes and broad grins. Tanned entrepreneurs, quick with a hearty handshake and a slap on the back for the good buddies, a bit more formality tempered with an easy-going friendliness for the Yankees. Older men in straw Sunday hats, men who'd be more at home tall in the metal seat of a farm tractor, slouch in the wooden folding chairs which seem to have taken root in the fresh macadam and wait for the plant dedication to begin. Perspiration trickles in small rivulets down the temples of well-dressed women sporting hairdos which run the gamut from haute coiffure to Loretta Lynn. They watch the speakers file onto the platform: the chatter—a polyglot of mostly Southern drawl spiked with Middle Atlantic nasal twang and a few genuinely foreign accents—trails off. . . . This is the Sunbelt. A good 20 years behind the sophisticated, industrialized North—and hopefully at least that far behind the North's festering sore of crime and corruption. The Sunbelt is joining the mainstream of the industrial U.S. and the mood is festive."—Ira Black, "Sunbelt: Myth or Mecca?", *Iron Age*, March 7, 1977, p. 39.

The Sunbelt—the U.S. frontier of the 1970s—is now the most rapidly growing segment of this nation. The emerging mix of people from the North and East—some of whom are returning South—with those already in the South and West reflects a radical change in historical regional distribution patterns of the U.S. population. Pivotal to the change is the South. With both the highest birth rates and highest out-migration rates of any region, the South became known as America's breeding-ground in the century following the Civil War. By 1970, however, even with declines in both white and black fertility,

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Dr. Biggar wishes to acknowledge the help of Cynthia Flynn, Robert Wiseman, and Charles Longino, Jr., her colleagues in a study of elderly migration in the United States, sponsored by the Institute for Social and Environmental Studies of the University of Kansas and funded by the National Institute on Aging, and the helpful comments received in the preparation of this Bulletin *from Leon F. Bouvier and Calvin L. Beale.*

but with the tide of out-migration reversed, the South joined the West as a rapidly growing region. Within these two regions, as we shall see, most newcomers have moved into the states which make up the Sunbelt, as defined below and depicted in the maps on pages 18, 20, and 22.

New regional growth patterns

Figure 1 (page 2) illustrates the remarkable shifts in population growth patterns that have occurred among the four U.S. regions since 1950. Numbers added to the Northeast and North Central regions have fallen steadily. The West, however, has grown consistently by some 2.8 to 4 million people during each five-year period, while the South has fluctuated between additions of 3 to 5 million. After a drop to 3.4 million in the second half of the 1960s, the South then registered a larger increase than the three other regions combined in the first half of the 1970s—5.1 versus 4.2 million.

Besides these distinct changes in patterns of population growth, there has also been an important shift in the two components that make up that growth—natural increase and net migration—as seen in the table at the bottom of Figure 1. With birth rates down everywhere, natural increase (births minus deaths) has fallen in all four regions but particularly in the South. Meanwhile net migration has continued to be important in the growth of the West, and the South has shifted from being on balance an exporter of people to an importer, most dramatically from 1970 to 1975 when net migration added six times more to the South's population than it had in the previous five years—2.6 million versus 400,000. As a result, natural increase and net migration have contributed about equally to population growth in the South and West since 1970.

It is this larger population growth of the South and the West and the increased importance of net migration in that growth that underlie the new regional population distribution pattern. This pattern in turn is the major factor in the growth of the Sunbelt.

Sunbelt versus Snowbelt

There is no one accepted listing of which states make up the Sunbelt and, contrariwise, the Snowbelt. Neither area is recognized by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. States which fall within the four official Census Bureau regions—Northeast, North Central, South, and West—and divisions within those regions are listed in the box on the opposite page. Because timely data on migration are often available only for the four regions, demographic analysis has tended to combine the West and the South to indicate the Sunbelt even though the climate of many Western states does not fit that image—Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, for instance. In this *Bulletin*, we do look at regional migration, comparing the West and the South with the Northeast and North Central regions. But for our Sunbelt story, the lines are drawn more realistically

A common definition of the Sunbelt popular with the media takes in all states of the "Confederate South" (see box), plus Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. This comes closer to the climatic concept of the Sunbelt and covers most states which have experienced heavy in-migration since 1970. One recent writer drew the line along the 37th parallel, thus excluding Virginia from the above Sunbelt grouping, cutting off California north of San Francisco, and adding in the southern tip of Nevada.[1] Climatically this makes sense but the definition rules out the use of Census Bureau migration data which are presented on the basis of traditionally defined political units. Another Sunbelt analysis by several distinguished economists and political scientists gave no definition at all![2]

For this *Bulletin*, the Sunbelt is drawn to include those Southern and Western

States Included in Varying Definitions of U.S. Regions

Confederate South

Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas

Sunbelt as defined in this Bulletin [a]

Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, New Mexico, Arizona, California

Regions and Divisions as defined by U.S. Bureau of the Census

Region	Division	States
Northeast	New England	Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut
	Middle Atlantic	New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
North Central	East North Central	Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin
	West North Central	Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas
South	South Atlantic	Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida
	East South Central	Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi
	West South Central	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
West	Mountain	Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada
	Pacific	Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii

[a] Snowbelt: All states not in Sunbelt.

states with a mild climate, recreational facilities, and expanding job opportunities in industry and services which combine to make them attractive destinations for migrants. These are the states along the nation's southeastern and southern rim, plus Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri. (See box, and maps on pages 18, 20, 22.) Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas are in the Census South. New Mexico, Arizona, and California are in the Census West. Missouri—included because the Ozarks in the south of the state are a primary destination for elderly migrants—is in the southern tip of the North Central region.

All other states are consigned to the "Snowbelt." In many instances, this is a misnomer. Certainly snow is rare in Nevada and along the coastal plain of Oregon and the state of Washington. However, the division does sort out those states now experiencing the Sun-

belt in-migration phenomenon so that we can distinguish that movement from the more general westward flow and inter-divisional population exchanges to the north of the Sunbelt.

In 1970, the 15 states which make up our Sunbelt contained almost one-third (61,344,702) of the U.S. population. Since then, they have absorbed almost two-thirds of the nation's growth. Together, Florida, Texas, and California have registered more than half of the Sunbelt's population increase. Florida alone has added more people than the Northeast and North Central regions combined.[3] By 1977, some 85 million people—close to 40 percent of the total U.S. population—lived in these 15 Sunbelt states.

New issues

Major shifts in population distribution such as have been witnessed in the Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt migration generate social changes in the areas losing population as well as those gaining new residents. Concern in the North and East over the decline of industrial prowess and the exodus of residents is summed up in the recent slogan, "The North Will Rise Again!" Calvin Beale aptly describes the Northern position:

> "The North, which served as an employment haven for many Southerners in earlier years, finds itself faced with a much older industrial fabric, a concentration of people in very large metropolitan areas during a period of sentiment for smaller communities, a deteriorated rail system, well advertised urban fiscal troubles, winter weather problems, and a more rigid, higher cost labor system. In such a context, it not only fails to attract as many people as it used to, but also finds itself losing more of its own population to other regions."[4]

The North, then, looks to a period of slow or no growth. But this in itself is not so troubling as the nature of the population dynamic which underlies the slow growth—out-migration. Because migrants on the whole tend to be the younger, more qualified workers, the North is losing the able youth who might be most likely to provide the creative ideas and enthusiastic leadership needed to tackle the problems associated with declining metropolitan areas.

The Sunbelt, on the other hand, must devise ways to provide education, housing, and other services for its flood of new residents while still maintaining reasonable levels of social services for current residents. Consider the 40 percent population increase in Arizona between 1970 and 1976, for example: for every five persons demanding services in 1970, there are at least seven today. Unfortunately this increasing pressure on local and state agencies in the Sunbelt is taking place just as citizens' rights groups are stirring up support for "Proposition 13" fiscal accountability.

The "Sunning of America" challenges public planners at all levels of government. In the North, where the loss of industry means a shrinking tax base at the same time that those left behind must work out solutions to rising unemployment, traffic congestion, crime, and air and water pollution, priorities must be reordered if unreduced public budgets for social and economic services are to be justified. In the Sunbelt the dilemma for planners is how to increase services while reducing tax expenditures.

The mass media has bombarded the general public with gross statistics on the numbers of people who have changed residence in the Sunbelt migration. However, public officials require more specific information about these population shifts in order to carry out rational short- and long-range planning. While it is interesting to know that the new migration to the South carries Northerners as well as returning Southern-born whites and blacks, planners need to know where they are coming from and where they are going. Migration follows well channelized streams, and planners must identify the location and direction of these streams and the proportion of migrants who are using

them. To estimate what types of services will be most needed, they should also be aware of the characteristics of the migrants who are moving into specific areas. At the national level, for example, only 5 percent or so of migrants are age 65 and older. However, in Florida, approximately 20 percent of all migrants since 1970 have been retirees. Thus, for planners in Florida, the implication of migrant flows into the state is quite different from what it is in states where newcomers are much more likely to be younger people seeking jobs.

These, then, are the questions addressed in this *Bulletin*. What are the major streams which have carried migrants from one part of this country to another? Where are the emerging Sunbelt streams in the new movement to the South and continuing trek to the West? How do streams of elderly migrants compare to those for the overall population? What are the characteristics of the migrants to the Sunbelt and how do they compare with those of resident populations? Why is the Sunbelt more attractive, and why is the North and East less attractive to interstate migrants? What impact do the new migrants have on Sunbelt communities? What are the prospects for continuing migration to this emerging Sunbelt frontier?

First we take a look at what we mean by "migration."

Migration Definitions

This *Bulletin* focuses on internal migration within the U.S. and not international migration from out of the country. Thus, we omit a migration stream which is currently making its impact felt across the U.S. South and Southwest from the affluent suburbs of Dade County, Florida, to the crowded barrios of East Los Angeles—the largely illegal flow of "Hispanic" migrants now entering the U.S. at a rate estimated at more than a million a year.[5]

The U.S. Bureau of the Census—our major source of migration data—defines migration as a change of residence across a county boundary. Changes within a county are called local moves. In-migration refers to moves into a county, state, or region; out-migration to moves away from that geographical unit. Net migration is the result of the in- and out-migrations from the unit under consideration. If an area has more in-migrants than out-migrants over a particular time period, that area has experienced net in-migration.

While important in evaluating population growth and decline, net migration estimates provide little insight into the overall numbers of people moving into and out of a particular place. As Rand Corporation analyst Peter Morrison points out: "Net migratory gains or losses are only the surface ripples of powerful crosscurrents of movement, and the one-way drift of net migration is no measure of the many migratory moves that people undertake."[6] Between March 1975 and March 1978, for example, the South gained approximately 1,010,000 people through net migration. However, that was the net result of the moves of more than 4,700,000 persons in these three years—2,881,000 people moved into the South and 1,871,000 moved out.[7] Besides net migration estimates, this *Bulletin* uses gross in-migration estimates to provide a clearer image of the numbers and characteristics of the migrants who are descending upon Sunbelt communities.

Young migrants versus the elderly

Americans are highly mobile. In the 1950s and 1960s approximately one in five U.S. households changed residence every year. That rate has slowed in the 1970s to about one in six.[8] Most movers are not migrants, however, that is, persons who move across a county line. Of the some 70 million persons aged

3 and over who changed addresses within the U.S. between March 1975 and March 1978, just over 28 million, or 40 percent, moved across at least a county line and can thus be considered migrants.[9]

Migration rates vary significantly by age and, because migration tends to be linked to job changes for career mobility and changes in life cycles, young adults are more highly represented among migrants than older adults. Younger migrants tend to move to areas with better economic and housing opportunities. The post-World War II industrialization of the South has improved both economic and housing opportunities in that region. Therefore, it is not surprising that the tide of general migration has swung southward.

Although older people are popularly viewed as stable and resistant to change, migration (that is, moving to at least another county) has been increasing among the U.S. elderly population in recent decades. Between 1935 and 1940, approximately 7 percent of Americans aged 65 and older changed their county of residence. Between 1965 and 1970, almost 9 percent did so. However, the migration rate for the general population increased considerably more over the same period—from 12 to 20 percent.[10]

Among the elderly, migration tends to be linked with such critical life events as retirement, loss of a spouse, or a health problem which disrupt former social relationships. Thus, elderly migrants often seek destinations which offer milder climates, well-developed services for the aged, and opportunities for leisure-time activities where they may establish new social networks.[11] Climate-wise the Sunbelt appeals to the elderly more than much of the Snowbelt. In addition, several Sunbelt states—California, Florida, Arizona, and Texas—have promoted commercialized recreational and health service centers for the aged to national renown. With the availability of Medicare and larger shares of American workers now covered by Old Age Survivors Insurance (Social Security) and other pension plans, more and more of the elderly now feel financially secure enough to seek out these advantages.

The different reasons which prompt young people and the elderly to migrate would lead us to expect differences between the Sunbelt migration patterns of the general population and those of the elderly. Hence, this distinction is made wherever possible in this *Bulletin*.

Internal Migration in U.S. History

With national birth rates at a record low level, the movement of people in and out now figures more importantly than ever in determining whether different areas of the U.S. grow or decline. But internal migration has always been a dynamic force in U.S. history.

The settlement of the Western frontier was accomplished by the movement of second and third generation colonists, augmented by immigrant streams from western and northern Europe. This 19th century migration stream has continued to be significantly large throughout most of the 20th century. Until well after World War II, the westward movement of America was accompanied by two other major streams. One was rural-to-urban migration. Each decade since the turn of the 20th century has found larger shares of America's population living in urban areas. The large flow of migrants from the South to the Northeast and North Central regions beginning in the late 19th century, particularly of black people after World War I, comprises the third major movement.

Westward trek continues

By 1970, only the first of these three historic streams of internal migrants remained what it was in former decades.

Photo: American Association of Retired Persons

Sailors head for home at a lavish retirement community in Florida. Net in-migration added 1.5 million to Florida's population between 1970 and 1977 and some 20 percent of the migrants have been retirees.

California, still the primary destination of Western migration, has had a major role in the growth of the West. "From the Gold Rush in 1849 to the great exodus from the Dust Bowl in the 1930's to a huge migration of people seeking aerospace jobs and bungalows in the San Fernando Valley during and after World War II, in-migration has been as characteristic of California as its benign sun, scalloped coastline and pragmatic styles of living."[12]

During the 1950s and 1960s California welcomed an average 1,000 migrants a day. In the 1960s, net in-migration added 2.1 million to California's population compared to just 800,000 in that of the twelve other Western states (including Alaska and Hawaii).[13] Aircraft factory shutdowns, student rebellion, and the San Fernando Valley earthquake slowed the intake during the early 1970s. Although in-migration picked up again by 1975, California's gain through net migration amounted to just about 800,000 people in the first seven years of the 1970s. Meanwhile the gain for the balance of Western states rose to about one and a third million.[14] Among these are Arizona, which has grown particularly rapidly since 1970, and New Mexico. Together with California these make up the three Western states included in our definition of the Sunbelt and thus the continuing westward migration is a significant factor in the growth of the Sunbelt.

Rural-urban turnaround

The 19th and 20th century movement to the West was accompanied by the movement of people from rural to urban areas. Internal migration expert Calvin Beale describes the history of this national stream:

"The United States was so overwhelmingly rural in its early years that it took 100 years of subsequent faster growth of towns and cities from 1820 to 1920 to reach the point where urban people first outnumbered rural people. The political shock from the rural-

to-urban movements of the World War I period was so great that Congress could not agree on an apportionment formula for the House of Representatives following the 1920 Census."[15]

After World War I when the tractor and other gasoline-powered machinery replaced men and draft animals, the flight from the farm accelerated. World War II further uprooted the rural worker so that over the 30 years before 1970 millions moved to the city, leaving behind hundreds of depopulated rural counties.

By 1970 the rural-to-urban stream had become negligible, partly because of the small numbers of people still residing in rural areas. But because this stream had been such an integral part of our history, demographers were skeptical when Beale first pointed to its reversal.[16] From 1970 to 1977, for the first time since the turn of the century, overall population growth was higher in nonmetropolitan areas (10.7 percent) than in metropolitan areas (4.4 percent. Termed Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas [SMSAs] by the federal government, metropolitan areas are those which contain a county with a city [sometimes two] of at least 50,000 inhabitants, plus surrounding counties which are primarily dependent upon the central city for jobs and services.) Some 2.3 million more people moved into nonmetropolitan counties than moved out of them between 1970 and 1975. These same counties had lost about 3 million people by net out-migration during the 1960s.[17]

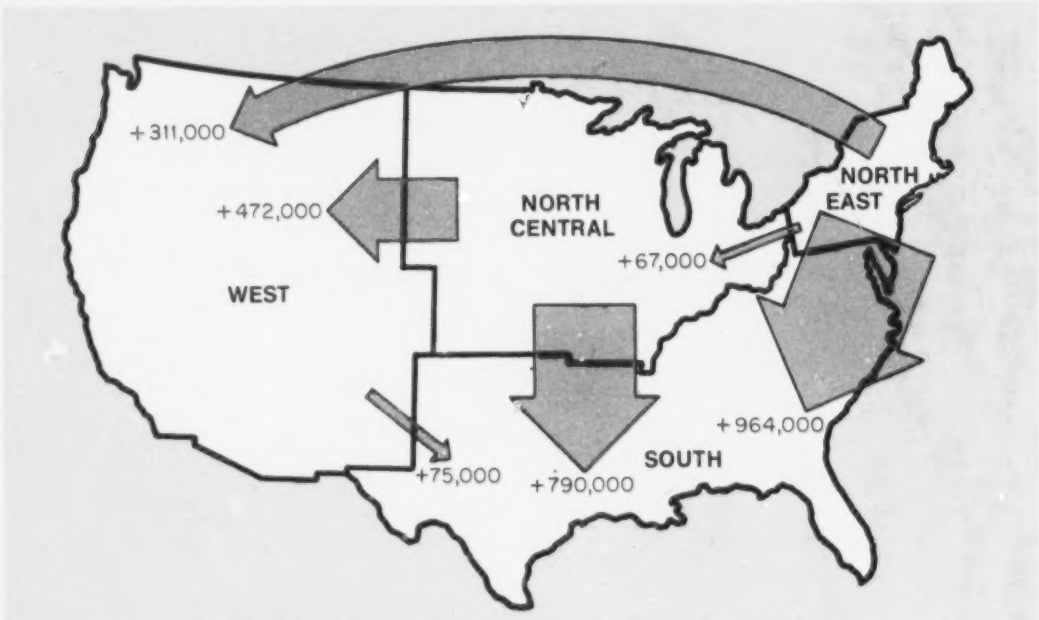
The slowdown in metropolitan growth has been concentrated in the largest metropolitan areas—those with two million or more people. In contrast to net in-migration of 1.8 million in the 1960s, these largest metropolitan centers lost 2.2 million persons through net outmigration from 1970 to 1976—almost identical to the in-migration gain of the rural areas and small towns which make up nonmetropolitan areas. Small and medium-sized metropolitan areas with less than 750,000 people are continuing to attract migrants at higher rates than during the 1960s.[18]

These trends are most evident in the South in particular and in the West and, indeed, go far toward explaining the recent surge in Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt migration.

Northerners now spurning the nation's largest and oldest cities for the more relaxed if less lucrative life of the open countryside or small towns might well turn to the South. With over a third of its population still living in nonmetropolitan counties, compared to one-seventh in the Northeast, for example, the South remains the most rural region of the nation.[19] Further, the South and the Sunbelt states of the Western region contain more than their share of retirement centers located well away from bustling cities. Beale has found that, outside of growth in nonmetropolitan counties next to metropolitan areas, which can be considered urban spillover, the "rural renaissance" which began developing during the 1960s was most closely associated with retirement communities—defined as counties with a high in-migration of persons aged 60 years and over. The 360 such fast-growing counties which he identified in 1970 doubled their growth rates in the next five years and, to judge from 1975 county data on persons aged 65 and over, have now been joined by many more specialized retirement communities. Beale's associate researcher at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Vera Banks, points out that, in addition to traditional retirement centers in Florida and Southwestern states, many of the new areas attracting elderly persons are located in the Sunbelt as defined by this *Bulletin:* for example, the Ozarks (straddling Arkansas and Missouri); the hill country of central Texas; the Sierra Nevada foothills in California; and the east Texas coastal plain.[20]

Banks also points out that metropolitan living is on a smaller scale in the

Figure 2. Directions of Interregional Net Migration Flows: U.S., 1970-1975



Source: Adapted from Brian J. L. Berry and Donald C. Dahmann, *Population Redistribution in the United States in the 1970s* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, 1977) Figure 4.

South than elsewhere. Only a fifth of the South's metropolitan population lived in large metropolitan areas in 1974 compared to three-fifths in the two Northern regions and the West. Thus, the South has been less affected by the slowdown in large-city growth while its relatively more numerous small and medium-sized cities have continued to grow, as have those of the West. In fact, the South was the only region where population growth in metropolitan counties as a whole from 1970 to 1975 was higher than for the nonmetropolitan sector—9.3 versus 6.9 percent. In sum, as Banks observes, "The South [has been] a benefactor of the general shift of population growth down the residential scale, whether it be into the smaller SMSA's or into rural areas and small towns."[21]

This shift has fed into the reversal of the third major U.S. internal migration stream—the historical movement of both whites and blacks from the South to the North (and the West to some extent.)

South-North migration reversal

"Seedbed of the nation," the South was a primary exporter of people through World War II.[22] Long the most underdeveloped and rural area of the U.S., the South lagged behind as technological change and industrialization surged in the Northeast and later in the West. Thus, poor whites and blacks had little choice but to trek north or west in search of jobs as the Depression struck hard in the South's farmlands and later when King Cotton was mechanized, sharecropping abandoned, and Southern cotton lost markets to other fibers and regions.[23] Even after World War II, most

Southern states exported more people than they received.

Florida has consistently gained population by net in-migration since the mid-1950s—some 1.3 million between 1960 and 1970, for example, which increased the state's population by almost one-fourth over the total of 1960. Until 1970, the continuing though diminishing losses of most other Southern states partly negated Florida's gains. However, by 1977, all states in the South could boast of net population gains through migration.[24] Indeed, in the first seven years of this decade, the other 15 Southern states registered even more net in-migration (2 million) than Florida (1.5 million), adding up to a total increase of 5.5 percent over the region's 1970 population.

In absolute numbers, the South's migration reversal has been accounted for primarily by whites. Blacks continued to register net out-migration from the South during the 1960s as they had since the Civil War. But the picture began to change for blacks also during the early 1970s. By 1975-78, Census Bureau surveys showed that the flows of blacks in and out of the South were at least in balance and may actually have tipped to net migration into the South.[25]

Although newspapers and magazines have given wide coverage to stories of "Southerners going home," return migration was not the most important factor in the early years of the South-to-North migration reversal. Using "state-of-birth" data from the 1960 and 1970 censuses, Census Bureau demographers Larry Long and Kristin Hansen have found that, although the return of Southern-born migrants to the South stepped up during the 1960s, the two most important factors in the shift to net in-migration during that decade were a decrease in the rate at which native Southerners left the South and increased migration of non-Southerners into the South.[26] Even among return migrants there is some doubt as to how many were really "going home." More than two-fifths (43 percent) of white migrants and a third (34 percent) of blacks did *not* return to their state of birth. Whether or not return migration became more important after 1970 when the North-to-South tide accelerated will not be known until detailed data are available from the 1980 census.

To sum up, of the three major migration streams which have traditionally redistributed the U.S. population, only one, the movement West, continues in full force today. The earlier rural-to-urban tide has ebbed and has now been overtaken by a sizeable movement from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan areas, and the earlier outflow from the South has also reversed direction. We now take a closer look at the interregional migration patterns which have contributed to the nation's population shifts.

Recent Interregional Migration Patterns

In an analysis of 1970-75 data for the National Academy of Sciences, Brian Berry and Donald Dahmann confirmed that migrants to the South in the first half of the 1970s came overwhelmingly from the North, as illustrated in Figure 2 (page 11). The net balance of migrants moving between regions shows the South far out in front with a gain of 1.8 million and the West in second place with 783,000. All but a fraction of the South's gain was at the expense of the North Central and Northeast regions and it is clear that the pre-1950 South-to-North tide has indeed reversed in full force. Further, the former South-to-West movement has also reversed; the net movement between these regions, even though small, is southward rather than westward. It is also clear that the movement to the West from the North and East continues. Data from the Census Bureau's monthly Current Population Survey on moves between March

Table 1. Where Migrants Within the U.S. Went Between 1975 and 1978, by Region: Total, Elderly, White, and Black

Region of origin	Total number of migrants[a] (000's)	Percent who stayed in region	Destination of those who left their region (percent)			
			Northeast	North Central	South	West
Total migrants						
Northeast	5,134	69.3	—	17.7	57.3	25.0
North Central	7,593	71.4	11.4	—	52.3	36.3
South	9,282	79.9	23.8	37.8	—	38.4
West	6,125	75.1	12.0	32.7	55.3	—
U.S. total	28,134	74.6	12.3	20.8	40.3	26.6
Elderly migrants[b]						
Northeast	295	61.7	—	7.1	77.0	15.9
North Central	309	71.5	6.8	—	46.6	46.6
South	317	83.3	32.1	43.4	—	24.5
West	255	81.2	12.5	35.4	52.1	—
U.S. total	1,176	74.3	9.6	15.9	50.7	23.8
White migrants						
Northeast	4,578	70.3	—	17.3	56.1	26.7
North Central	7,082	78.3	11.0	—	53.1	35.8
South	8,221	80.4	25.2	37.2	—	37.6
West	5,613	74.8	12.1	33.6	54.3	—
U.S. total	25,494	75.1	12.5	20.6	40.6	26.3
Black migrants						
Northeast	467	62.0	—	15.8	67.8	15.8
North Central	411	60.8	8.1	—	56.5	35.4
South	985	75.2	16.0	44.7	—	39.3
West	261	67.4	10.6	20.0	69.4	—
U.S. total	2,124	68.6	9.2	23.1	40.5	27.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1978," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 331, November 1978, Table 7.

[a] All persons aged 3 or more who moved across at least a county line.

[b] Migrants aged 65 years or more.

1975 and March 1978 indicate that this 1970-75 pattern of interregional migration persists to the present day.

To achieve population growth when natural increase is low, a region must retain its own residents at the same time that it attracts new residents from other areas; that is, out-migration rates must be low and in-migration rates high. Table 1 illustrates that this was indeed true of the South and West in the most recent period for which data are available: March 1975 to March 1978. Among all migrants—persons who moved across at least a county line—the percent in the South and the West who chose to stay in their own region was higher (79.9 and 75.1 respectively) than the national average (74.6 percent), and their regional out-migration rates thus lower than those of the Northeast and North Central regions.

In addition to their higher "migrant retention rates," the South and the West also attracted the largest shares of migrants who crossed regional boundaries (columns 3 through 6 in Table 1). Of all the nation's interregional migrants,

two in five (40.3 percent) chose Southern destinations, and the South drew more than half of all people who left the other three regions. The West was second in each case.

The South also clearly dominated the destination choices of the elderly and both white and black migrants, attracting more than half (50.7 percent) of all the elderly and about 40 percent of all the white and black migrants who moved across regional boundaries. The South appears to be a particularly strong favorite for interregional migrants among these three subgroups in the Northeast where more than three-fourths of the elderly (77.0 percent), two-thirds of blacks (67.8 percent), and more than half (56.1 percent) of whites chose a Southern state.

All in all interregional migration patterns since 1970 verify that the westward movement continues, that the pre-1950 exodus from the South has reversed, and the South is now the primary destination for migrants within the United States. However, this still leaves the questions of whether recent migrants to the South and the West are choosing the Sunbelt states within those two regions and which routes they are most likely to follow. To answer these, we must turn to state-to-state migration data because our classification of Sunbelt and Snowbelt states cuts across regional groupings. With such data, we can look at the overall flow from Snowbelt to Sunbelt and pinpoint the origin and destination of flows into each of the Sunbelt states.

Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt Migration Established, 1965 to 1970

The most recent state-to-state migration data available come from the 1970 census. With the stepped-up pace of migration into the Sunbelt since 1970, these data undoubtedly underestimate the numbers of migrants now involved in specific interstate streams. However, they do shed useful light on the *patterns* of Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt migration. While newer streams have no doubt emerged since 1970, the established streams which will continue to carry the majority of migrants are revealed in a study based on data for the 1965 to 1970 period which were drawn from the one-in-one-hundred "public use" sample tape of the 1970 census, using the records of all interstate migrants in the sample and a subset of persons aged 60 or more.[27] (The age cutoff for

Table 2. Where Sunbelt and Snowbelt Interstate Migrants Moved Between 1965 and 1970

	General migration to/within			Elderly migration[a] to/within		
	Sunbelt	Snowbelt	Total	Sunbelt	Snowbelt	Total
	Percent		Number (000's)	Percent		Number (000's)
Sunbelt	51.2	48.8	6,485	56.4	43.6	338
Snowbelt	41.0	59.0	10,505	59.0	41.0	775
Total	44.9	55.1	16,991	58.2	41.8	1,123

Source: All interstate migrants on Public Use One-in-One-Hundred Sample Tape of 1970 U.S. census.

[a] Interstate migrants aged 60 or more.

Note: For states included in the Sunbelt and the Snowbelt, see box, page 5.

"elderly" migrants was set at 60 rather than 65 in order to cover the increasing number of persons who retire early.)

What proportion of migrants choose the Sunbelt?

As noted earlier, the 15 Sunbelt states as defined in this *Bulletin* contained about one-third of the U.S. population in 1970. Therefore, if migrants distributed themselves in proportion to population numbers, we might expect the Sunbelt to have attracted a similar proportion of all migrants who moved from state to state between 1965 and 1970. In fact, however, as seen in Table 2, almost half (44.9 percent) of all interstate migrants chose to move to or remain in the Sunbelt. Among interstate migrants originating in the Sunbelt, more than half (51.2 percent) moved to other Sunbelt states, and Sunbelt destinations were the choice for 41.0 percent of all interstate migrants originating in the Snowbelt.

Using the same proportionality principle, it appears that the Sunbelt had an even stronger attraction for elderly interstate migrants in this period. In 1970, 35.4 percent of the U.S. population aged 60 or more lived in the 15 Sunbelt states. However, as also seen in Table 2, 58.2 percent of all interstate migrants of this age chose Sunbelt states between 1965 and 1970. Among elderly interstate migrants in the Snowbelt, the proportion moving to the Sunbelt was 59.0 percent.

Favorite Sunbelt states

The continuing migration to the West and emerging migration to the South between 1965 and 1970 clearly centered on the Sunbelt states within those regions. However, the influx was not shared equally among the 15 Sunbelt states. Three Sunbelt states—California, Florida, and Texas—ranked highest in numbers gained among all the nation's interstate migrants during this period, as seen in Table 3 on the next page. California attracted the largest proportion of any state (10.5 percent) and together with Florida, Texas, and Virginia, accounted for more than a quarter (26.6 percent) of total interstate migration during this five-year period. Migrants entering these four Sunbelt states came to about the same number as those entering the other six among the ten top receiving states which were all highly industrialized Snowbelt states.

As might be expected, the Sunbelt also held the three top positions among receiving states for elderly interstate migrants. Florida alone attracted almost a quarter (23.5 percent) of all the nation's elderly interstate migrants and together with California (in second place) Arizona (third) and Texas (sixth) accounted for more than two in every five (40.9 percent) of all interstate migrants aged 60 or more. Although the six other top-ranking states of destination for elderly migrants were in the Snowbelt, two of these—Washington and Oregon—have relatively mild climates, particularly along their shared Pacific coastline. Both appear to be emerging retirement centers.

The impact of general in-migration was greatest in Florida where more than one-sixth (17.9 percent) of the 1970 population had moved into the state over the preceding five years. In Virginia, one of every eight residents in 1970 (12.8 percent) had moved into the state over that period. This probably reflected continuing expansion of the federal government which drew people to locate in the Virginia suburbs to the south of Washington, D.C., and Vietnam War activities which brought armed forces migrants to Virginia's several military bases.

Even more impressive is the implication of migration of the elderly for Florida and Arizona where some 20 percent of the 1970 population aged 60 or more had arrived during the preceding five years. In these two states, for every five elderly persons to be housed and

Table 3. Top Ten Receiving States in General and Elderly Interstate Migration: U.S., 1965-1970

Destination state	General migration				Elderly migration[a]			
	Rank	Number of in-migrants (000's)	Percent of nation's inter-state migrants	Percent of state's 1970 population	Rank	Number of in-migrants (000's)	Percent of nation's inter-state migrants aged 60 or more	Percent of state's 1970 population aged 60 or more
California	1	1,784	10.5	8.9	2	107	9.5	4.3
Florida	2	1,215	7.2	17.9	1	263	23.5	20.0
Texas	3	915	5.4	8.2	6	40	3.6	2.7
Illinois	4	700	4.1	6.3	10	23	2.6	1.9
New York	5	672	4.0	3.7	8	33	2.9	1.1
Ohio	6	648	3.8	6.1	9	32	2.9	2.1
New Jersey	7	605	3.6	8.4	4	46	4.1	4.3
Virginia	8	596	3.5	12.8				
Pennsylvania	9	538	3.2	4.6				
Michigan	10	520	3.1	5.9				
Arizona					3	48	4.3	19.9
Washington					5	41	3.7	4.5
Oregon					7	34	3.0	6.3
Total			48.4				60.1	

Source: See Table 2.

[a]Interstate migrants aged 60 or more.

served in 1965, there were six in 1970.

If the rising tide of Sunbelt migration during the latter half of the 1960s was largely directed into a few specific Sunbelt states, was it also identifiable in terms of origin? From which states in the Snowbelt and Sunbelt were these migrants mostly coming? Here, again, we turn to a proportionality principle to single out what are known as "salient" migrant streams.[28] If, for example, the migration stream from New York to Florida is larger than would be expected in terms of all the nation's interstate migrants who originate from New York and the percent of all migrants received by Florida, that stream exceeds Florida's proportionate share of migrants leaving New York. It is such salient state-to-state streams which define the major migrant flows into and within the Sunbelt and which can help planners in understanding the nature of the new residents who will be seeking jobs and services.

Based again on the state-to-state migration data for 1965-70 available from the 1970 census, the maps in Figures 3 and 4 display the salient streams from the Snowbelt to the Sunbelt and those within the Sunbelt for interstate migrants in general and for the elderly. Figure 5 combines this information to reveal the Sunbelt states which led in attracting migrants from long distances between 1965 and 1970 and those which pulled extra large numbers of migrants from states closer at hand.

Salient general migration streams

The pattern of salient streams from Snowbelt to Sunbelt states for overall migration pinpoints those Sunbelt states which depend to a greater extent on northern migrants (top panel, Figure 3, next page). Florida, California, Missouri, Virginia, and Arizona all had at least four salient streams of migrants of all ages from the Snowbelt. As we have seen, Florida, California, and Virginia were also among the top ten destination states for all interstate migration between 1965 and 1970 (Table 3).

All four of Florida's salient streams originated long distances to the north in New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Ohio. Arizona also had several long-distance streams reaching from Michigan and Illinois in the eastern part of the North Central region across three central states—Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska—to Montana, Washington, Oregon, and Nevada in the Western region. Arizona, with ten, had the largest number of salient streams from the Snowbelt and appeared to be emerging as a primary destination for migrants in the western two-thirds of the country.

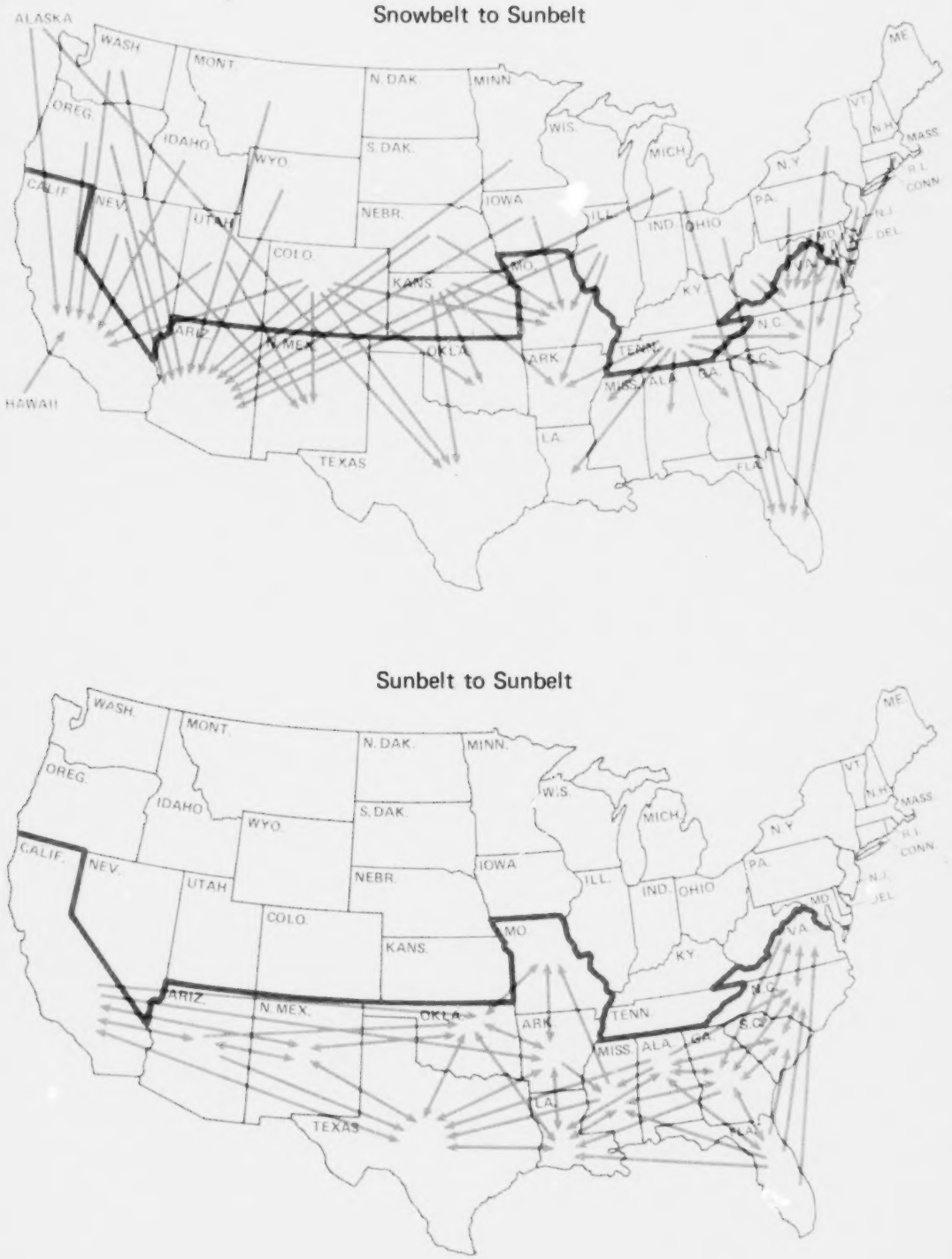
Snowbelt migrants to California, the leading destination for all 1965-70 interstate migration, tended to come from nearby states. Except for those from Hawaii and Alaska, all California's streams were from adjacent states or states next to those.

The salient migration streams into Missouri and Virginia were even more localized. Missouri had a stream from Colorado, but the others were from adjacent states. Five of Virginia's streams came from nearby states. The sixth was from Rhode Island, probably composed mainly of military families who joined one of Virginia's east coast naval bases.

Each of the other ten Sunbelt states had at least one salient migration stream from the Snowbelt. Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, and North Carolina had three apiece, mostly from adjacent states or within their own Census division, although Texas had a long-distance stream from Alaska which could well have been made up of oil workers returning from work on the Alaskan pipeline.

Only at a very general level does the Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt migration appear to be focused at the point of origin. The states which sent migrants to the Sunbelt span the country. At the same

Figure 3. Salient Streams of General Interstate Sunbelt Migration: U.S., 1965-1970



Source: All interstate migrants on Public Use One-in-One-Hundred Sample Tape of 1970 U.S. Census.
Note: For definition of a "salient" migration stream, see text, page 17.

time there appears to be a dividing line in terms of whether Snowbelt migrants go east or west. Except for streams from Michigan to Arizona and from Tennessee to Louisiana and Arkansas, an imaginary line from the lower tip of Lake Michigan, south along the Mississippi River, divides the flows. However, within these two areas, the Snowbelt origins are generally scattered. An exception in the east is Tennessee which was the origin for streams to each adjacent Sunbelt state in an arc from North Carolina west through Arkansas and also sent a significant number of migrants to Louisiana. To the west, Colorado was a primary Snowbelt origin state with salient streams to Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Both Tennessee and Colorado had large in- and out-migration flows between 1965 and 1970. It seems likely that many migrants leaving those states chose Sunbelt destinations.

Two types of Sunbelt migration destination emerge from this picture. One tends to pull its migrants over long distances from origins spread across the nation. Florida and Arizona are examples. A second type draws its migrants from states which are adjacent to the Sunbelt destination or at least within the same Census region. California, Virginia, and Missouri fit this regional model.

These two types of destination also appear in the pattern of salient streams between states within the Sunbelt (bottom panel, Figure 3). Here, the two centers of national migration—Florida and Arizona—had the fewest (two) salient streams, while each of the three regional migration centers—California, Virginia, and Missouri—had at least three salient streams from other Sunbelt states.

The two leading within-Sunbelt migration centers were Texas and Oklahoma. Texas not only attracted a significant number of migrants from states adjacent to its boundaries, but from California, Arizona, Alabama, and Mississippi as well. Similarly, Oklahoma had significant streams from four adjacent states and also from California and Louisiana. Migration into Oklahoma became important only about 1970 and has picked up momentum since then.

Salient elderly migration streams

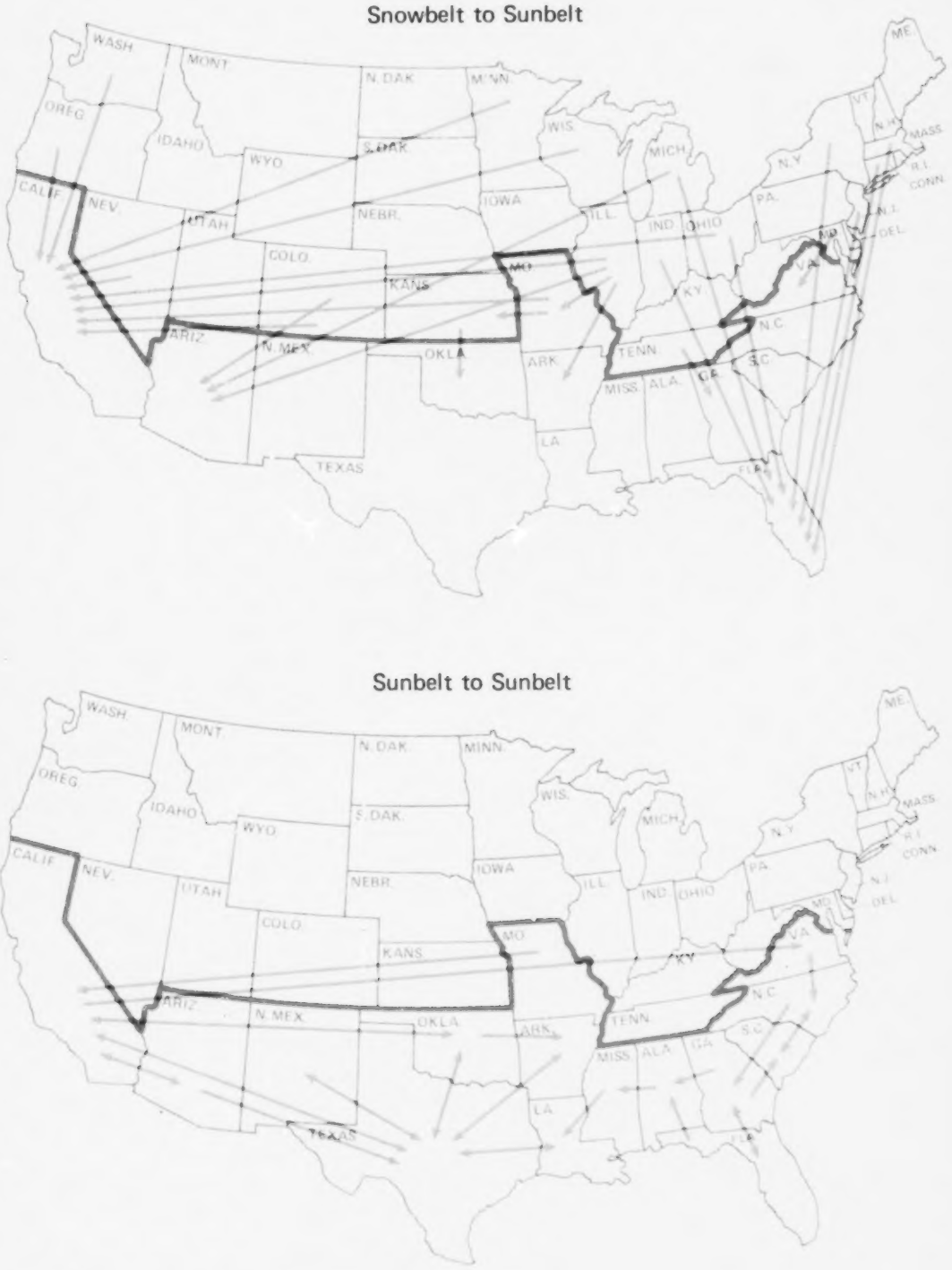
Because persons aged 60 or more accounted for only some 6 percent of total interstate migration between 1965 and 1970, their movements cannot be inferred from patterns of general migration. But these are important to identify since the impact of elderly in-migration on destination communities is so different.

The Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt pattern for the elderly is less complex than that of general migration (top panel, Figure 4). Elderly migrants were highly directed toward three states—Florida, California and Arizona—which together received over three-quarters of all these salient streams. These states appear to be national centers for elderly migration for each attracts migrants from long distances.

Four of California's eight salient streams came from its own Western region, but the other four reached well into the midwest—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Illinois. All seven of Florida's streams originated far to the north. Two of Arizona's streams were also from the midwest—Michigan and Illinois—while the third came from nearby Colorado. Other significant Sunbelt destinations received only one or two streams. Missouri and Arkansas probably make up a single elderly destination centered on the Ozarks, an emerging retirement area, which overlaps these two states.[29]

Similar to the pattern for general migration, an imaginary line running south from Lake Michigan along the Mississippi River divides the elderly migration streams to Florida in the east from the streams to California and

Figure 4. Salient Streams of Sunbelt Interstate Migration of the Elderly[a]: U.S., 1965-1970



Source: See Figure 3

[a]Migrants aged 60 or more

Arizona in the west, with the one exception of a stream from Michigan to Arizona.

The pattern of Sunbelt-to-Sunbelt elderly migration is diffuse (bottom panel, Figure 4). Only one destination state stands out. Texas had salient streams from all states adjacent to it, plus long-distance streams from California and Arizona. An interesting feature here is that Texas not only received substantial influx from six states, but also lost people in return to all of them except Arizona.

The remainder of significant elderly flows were mostly between adjacent states and many were also reciprocal (indicated on the maps by double-headed arrows). Those which were not two-way moved from the eastern part of the Sunbelt south and west toward Texas and those in the western part of the Sunbelt also terminated in the central area around Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

Elderly migration patterns point to the same two types of Sunbelt destination centers as found in general migration. California, Florida, and Arizona are national centers pulling elderly migrants from far-distant Snowbelt origins. Texas and, perhaps, Missouri-Arkansas appear to be regional centers with elderly migrants coming primarily from adjacent states.

National and regional Sunbelt migration centers

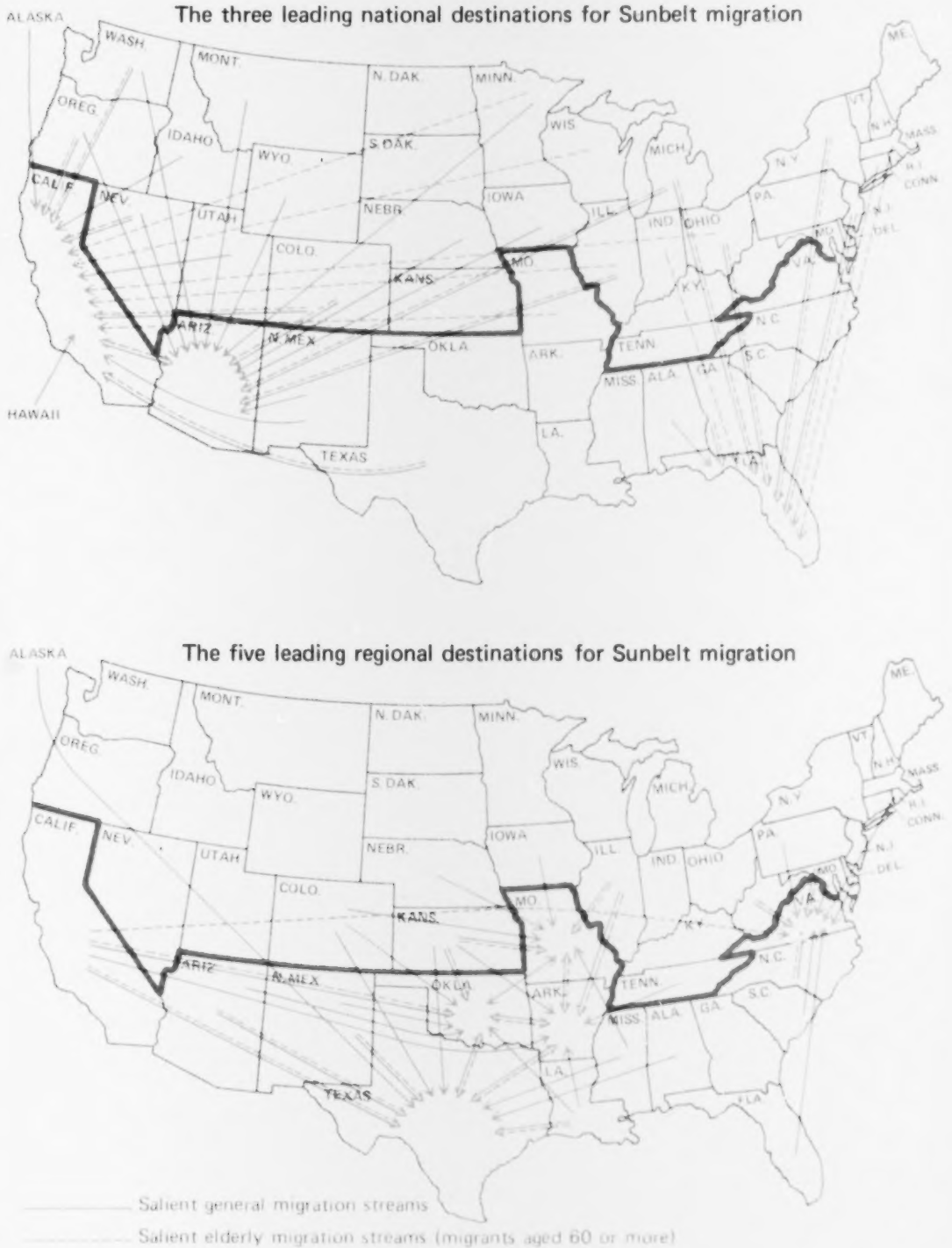
Distance plays an important role in migration. Migrants who move over long distances tend to be fewer in number but of higher status, however measured, than those who settle closer to home. Thus, the distinction between national and regional migration destination centers is important in terms of both the size of the migrant stream and the kinds of migrants found in each stream. Figure 5 combines the pattern of salient streams of general migration and of the elderly for the three major national Sunbelt centers (top panel) and for the five major regional Sunbelt centers (bottom panel).

The national character of migration into California, Arizona, and Florida is striking. California's general migration flows were fairly localized but, when combined with the elderly flows, its salient streams fan out across the western two-thirds of the nation. In Arizona it was the general migration streams which originated from all over the west but, when elderly streams are added in, it is clear why Arizona is now one of the country's most rapidly growing states. California and Arizona together attracted most of the migrants headed toward the southwest. For the eastern third of the country, Florida was the national migration focus of both general and elderly interstate migrants. Apart from the two local flows from Georgia and Alabama, both general and elderly migrants traveled long distances from the Northeast and the eastern North Central region to enjoy the Florida sunshine.

Movement into the five main regional centers also varied geographically. Virginia was the main regional center in the east, attracting general migrants from adjacent states as well as Florida and Rhode Island although only two significant local flows of the elderly. Those migrants in the western two-thirds of the nation who did not go into one of the western national centers tended to concentrate in Missouri and Arkansas (the Ozarks area), Oklahoma, or Texas. Texas, which pulled from all its adjacent states in addition to California, Arizona, Colorado, Mississippi, and Alabama, was the leading regional Sunbelt destination.

In sum, state-to-state migration data indicate that, even before 1970, the Sunbelt states attracted nearly half of the nation's interstate migrants and over half of elderly migrants. Further, with just one-third of the U.S. population in 1970, these 15 Sunbelt states drew

Figure 5. National and Regional Migration Destinations: U.S., 1965-1970



Source: See Figure 3

approximately three-fourths of migrants entering the South and West Census regions. The Sunbelt migration is due primarily to moves from the Snowbelt rather than moves within the Sunbelt itself and is focused on a few specific Sunbelt states. California and Arizona in the west and Florida in the east attract disproportionate numbers of Snowbelt migrants from long distances—the kind likely to be of higher status and thus presumably better able to support themselves in their new communities of residence. Texas appears to be the leading destination for migrants moving shorter distances within the Sunbelt itself. Migrants from the Snowbelt to the Sunbelt apparently still feel that "East is East and West is West" for, at least between 1965 and 1970, Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt migration streams were generally divided east and west by the Mississippi River.

All in all, it is obvious that the Sunbelt migration is more than a myth conceived and perpetuated by the media.

Attractions of the Sunbelt

What attracts Americans to the Sunbelt? There are many answers, but more than anything the rise of the Sunbelt is evidence of changes in the U.S. economic structure and in the lifestyles of its people that are as much qualitative as geographical.

Today, U.S. economic initiative and wealth are becoming fairly evenly distributed throughout the country. But, from the Civil War to the years preceding World War II, the Northeast dominated the South and the West. Northern harbors, inland waterways connected by man-made canals, and railways monopolized economic exchanges between the agricultural heartlands and the great cities of the east. By the mid-19th century, New Orleans, for example, once the major port for trade with continents to the east and south, was restricted to the transport of Southern agricultural crops up the Mississippi and out its tributaries. Southern reliance on a one-crop economy and Northern financial control of Southern industry fed into the South's dependent colonial ties with the Northeast. The dominance of King Cotton meant that the South was dependent on the North for other agricultural and industrial products. Absentee Northern owners provided the capital for the cotton plantations as well as for banks and the few manufacturing plants which developed during that period.

By 1950 the North had entered the post-industrial age, while the South stood at the threshold of economic development. In the cities of the North, both industry and people were moving away from the higher taxes and congestion of the central city to the suburbs and exurbs which offered the benefits of rural and small-town living. Some of that industry went South. First came labor-intensive, low-wage industry such as textiles and apparel, or industries oriented to natural resources such as oil and natural gas, chemicals, lumber, and paper. But later the capital-intensive industries—insurance, banking, and brokerage firms—moved South to support the emerging industrial development. More importantly, the South attracted new "leading-edge" industries, for example, small-parts electronics, and service industries such as real estate, tourism, and recreation. Ralph R. Widner of the Academy for Contemporary Problems describes it this way:

> "What is happening is that you have new plants, new expansions and new firms at a one-third higher rate in the South. The death rate [of businesses] is the same [as in the North]. But the birth rate is greater in the South."[30]

Industrial development in the South, along with stabilization (or, in some instances, decline) of industry in the

North, has closed the gap between the South and other regions. By the mid-1970s, economist William Serow declared:

"Although some elements of southern tradition undoubtedly remain, the South in terms of economic variables such as income and industrial composition of the labor force is now, in essence, no different from the remainder of the nation."[31]

In the West, development was well under way even before World War II. Agriculture expanded by sophisticated irrigation technology, the emerging aircraft industry, and the exploitation of oil fields readily absorbed the westward migrants uprooted by the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The author Kirkpatrick Sale sums up the industrial shifts since World War II which have fostered the Sunbelt's rise:

"In broad terms there has been a shift from the traditional heavy manufacturing long associated with the industrial belt of the Northeast to the new technological industries that have grown up in the Southern Rim—aerospace, defense, electronics—and from the dependency upon railroad transportation to the growth of air and highway transportation, both relatively more important in the Southern Rim. There has also been a development away from coal and heavy metals such as iron and steel, the resources of the Northeast, toward oil and natural gas and the light metals such as aluminum and titanium, the products of the Southern Rim. And in agriculture, new technologies have favored large-scale and often corporate farming, advantageous particularly where space is plentiful, growing seasons are long, and the crops are suitable [as in] the Southern Rim."[32]

Why industry favors the Sunbelt

What accounts for the development of industry in the Sunbelt? Industry replies, "A better climate for business!" A 1975 ranking of the 48 contiguous U.S. states on 31 criteria of business climate listed eight Sunbelt states in the top ten and none in the bottom ten ranks.[33] The major factors in business climate are the availability of energy, water, transportation, and qualified workers. The Sunbelt has always had the first two, and in the past two decades has developed the last two.

Energy is less costly in the Sunbelt for two reasons. First, the major sources for coal and gas are there or nearby and prices paid for energy thus lower than in the North. Second, the mild Sunbelt climate requires less energy for heat maintenance (even if more for air conditioning;). Industry thus uses less energy and pays less for what it does use.

In terms of water, the Sunbelt as a whole is fortunate. Although the three western Sunbelt states are arid, the largest underground water supply in the world lies between eastern Texas and the Atlantic sea coast.[34] And the Sunbelt's extensive highway and water transport systems, major air terminals, and inexpensive utilities all foster an efficient transportation and communication network between industrial settings.

Several factors play into the increased availability of qualified labor in the Sunbelt. Upgrading of higher educational programs and the development of community colleges have made the traditional college education as well as general adult education accessible to most Sunbelt residents. State-sponsored recruitment and training programs for skilled and semi-skilled labor have also given Sunbelt states an edge on providing a qualified labor pool. Alabama, for example, has fully equipped mobile units for machine-shop, screw-machine, and tool-and-die training which move about the state to train and retrain workers to meet specific industrial demands. South Carolina offers free technical training to prospective workers in communities where industry locates. Over the last 15 years, 58,000 people—about a sixth of the manufacturing labor force in that state—have been

trained and made available for almost 500 companies.[35]

Another factor in the availability of labor for industry is a rate of unionization about half that of the nation, thanks largely to "right-to-work" laws in all Sunbelt states except California, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Business sees this as fostering more favorable labor attitudes and an absence of the strong adversary relationship which characterizes labor-management ties in the North. "A sentiment frequently voiced by southern plant managers: The workers at our plant seem genuinely glad to have a job."[36]

In the absence of union pressure, wages are lower than in other parts of the nation. Further, the lower levels of living to which the recent rural and small-town migrants among the Southern workforce are accustomed puts fewer demands on the wage structure. Economist Lew Mandell summarizes it this way: "All other things being equal, you get people to work [in the Sunbelt] for less money, or for the same amount of money you can get better qualified employees, particularly in the managerial area."[37]

Other factors play into the favorable business climate of the Sunbelt. There are the general benefits of milder climate. Costly slowdowns due to snow and ice are fewer and construction costs are lower because the expense of insulation is less. Cheaper and more accessible land is another plus for the Sunbelt. In the North, land prices have skyrocketed and acquisition of industrial sites is impeded by a morass of bureaucratic zoning strictures. In the Sunbelt, not only is land cheaper, but public and local officials seem generally less suspicious of industrial development than their Northern counterparts.

Along with providing a more favorable business climate, the Sunbelt—like Avis—"tried harder" to attract industry. "The hallmark of media content has been peerless boosterism: congratulate growth rather than calculate its consequences; compliment development rather than criticize its import."[38] The Horace Greeley "Go West, young man, go West" was translated into the Sunbelt "Come South, y'all, come South" by the cheerleaders of the Southern presses. Older images of abject poverty, racism, redneck dominance, and Bible Belt conservatism have been replaced by promises of "sun" and "fun."

By 1976 even the Northern press emphasized the advantages of the Sunbelt lifestyle: the comfort of environments still relatively free of urban blight; the benefits of lower taxes and lower energy costs. *Time* magazine—once labeled a primary South-baiter—defined the South as the new center of opportunity in its September 27, 1976, issue. Using 70 journalists, "the issue was a chamber of commerce dream: overwhelmingly positive, upbeat, lavish in booster praise, while any negative aspects were sparse, buried, appended, or carefully qualified with an apologetic, euphemistic tone."[39]

In South Carolina, a recent candidate for Secretary of State, James Clyburn, claimed, "We are all working to try to create 80,000 jobs a year and keep this state economically healthy." A reporter described this effort:

> "The state that ignited the Civil War has reversed the field, rushing to embrace not only Yankees, who have been streaming in with cash, jobs and factories for 20 years, but also the Germans, the French, the Kuwaits and other foreigners who have in recent years pumped the nation's highest level of foreign investment, per capita, into this development-hungry state . . . The international selling of South Carolina, which has brought in more than 70 foreign firms and $3 billion in new investment in this decade, can be seen along the inland foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains and the sandy plains of the coast."[40]

In Georgia, every year for the last 15 years, the state Chamber of Commerce has invited 30 to 40 chief executives from the North for a four- to five-day "red-carpet tour" of what that state

has to offer firms whose rising taxload makes the costs of operation prohibitive. They feel their annual $75,000 investment has paid off well in terms of industries attracted to Georgia.

Why people move to the Sunbelt

And why do people move to the Sunbelt? Partly because industry has already come and has generated new jobs for newcomers and longtime residents alike. Manufacturing jobs grew particularly rapidly in the Sunbelt during the 1960s. Despite the general U.S. recession, such jobs still rose by 432,000 (7.5 percent) in the Sunbelt in the first six years of the 1970s while declining by nearly 400,000 in the U.S. as a whole and by 769,000 in the Northeast and 185,000 in the North Central states.

Indeed, the Sunbelt states did very well in overall employment in the first six years of this decade. All except Georgia and North Carolina showed nonfarm job increases higher than the national average (14.3 percent). "In some [Sunbelt states] the increase was spectacular—40 percent in Arizona, 34 percent in New Mexico, 29 percent in Florida, and 23 percent in South Carolina. Texas, with the largest numerical gain, added 966,000 nonfarm jobs—a larger increase than that in Michigan, Ohio, and Massachusetts combined."[41] In 1977 alone, California's economy produced 700,000 new jobs for a rate of increase 30 percent higher than that of the nation as a whole.

But it is not just jobs but also the general climate, the cost of living, and the lifestyle which have brought people to the Sunbelt. Climate takes on increasing importance as people have more time and money to enjoy leisure activities. The Sunbelt offers both more "sun" and more "fun." Outdoor living, informal entertaining, and golf the year-round—all afford the new lifestyles which Americans have adopted.

The mild climate also lowers living costs. One observer, Peter Dickinson, recently found that two- and three-bedroom houses in the Sunbelt were 29 to 50 percent cheaper than in the North and East. He estimates that an intermediate standard of living in a nonmetropolitan area of the Sunbelt costs 18 percent less than in metropolitan areas across the U.S. as a whole. State and local taxes are also lower in the Sunbelt, as Dickinson points out. When he ranked states according to annual taxes paid per capita (excluding federal taxes), Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas were among the lowest fifth. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, and New Mexico were all below the national average as well.[42]

Americans continue to seek the qualities of living once associated with the suburb—the quiet life, the clean environment in which to live and bring up children. Now, however, they seem more willing to give up the advantages associated with the large metropolitan center. Higher crime rates, traffic congestion and the hassle of commuting, and "the day-to-day aggravation of having to deal with surly waitresses and cabbies, and the suffocating crush of unsmiling humanity" have discounted to some degree the opportunities for upward social mobility and cultural advantages of the great Northern metropolitan centers.[43] Calvin Beale summarizes this trend:

> "Increasingly people seem to be motivated to locate on the basis of positive opinions about the values of rural and small-town life and a more negative image about the merits of the large metropolitan area. They all need an income, but many appear willing to accept the somewhat lower incomes that accompany nonmetropolitan jobs in return for other benefits they seek."[44]

The Sunbelt provides that rural, small-town atmosphere. Even the largest cities have a rural "hospitality" about them.

Finally, the racial climate of the Sun-

Photo: American Association of Retired Persons

The Sunbelt offers plenty of scope for the outdoor activities which are part of the new lifestyles that Americans have adopted.

belt has changed. Blacks have joined the mainstream of Southern living. More and more are holding upper-level professional and managerial jobs. The South's several black mayors are evidence of not only the racial character of the central cities but also the more tolerant attitudes of the Southern-born as well as the Northern migrants. In the spring of 1978, for example, it was Republican bankers who raised funds to support the campaign of James Clyburn, a black Democrat candidate for Secretary of State in South Carolina! A black farmer revealed to a Detroit news writer why, for the first time since the Civil War, the South may soon have net in-migration of blacks. He had returned to Montgomery, Alabama, after three years in Chicago, leaving behind a good job—"but also the perils of the big city—'to live out in the more peaceful country.' He says the southern racial situation which drove many blacks North has improved greatly."[45]

The Sunbelt is part of the New South and the West which offer a wide range of alternative lifestyles. A woman from Birmingham, Alabama, speaks of the advantages she sees in "skiing in the Smokies, swimming in the Gulf, and dining in Atlanta—all just a few hours away by car." She also finds "low-cost living, affordable housing, available jobs, a strong educational system, good health care, safety, friendly people, racial harmony, environmental concern, competent local government, and a slower pace of life." For her those factors take precedence over the disco scene and earning a great deal of money.[46]

The Sunbelt migration, then, is part of a larger radical change in the South and the West. It is closely related to the industrial development which typifies most states in the "Southern Rim." It is a reflection of changing American lifestyles. It is part of the equalization of U.S. regions which has brought the South more in line with the rest of the nation.

What impact have the migrants had on the Sunbelt? To judge that, we must

look at the distinctive characteristics which the new residents have brought with them.

Who Moves and Why?

Demographer Donald Bogue has summarized the abundant literature on migration "selectivity":

> "Young migrants are selected primarily along the lines of long-run basic differences and imbalances in the social and economic organization, whereas adults are selected, in addition to and to a greater extent with respect to, current personal and social problems and current social changes."[47]

Youth predominates in migration steams because as they are finishing school and exploring career possibilities young people are willing to move to "new frontiers" in order to maximize the chances for good jobs. Characteristically, they dominate migration toward areas with developing economies. It was the young who led the great migrations from northern and western Europe and later from southern and eastern Europe to man the U.S. industrial expansion of the 19th century. Similarly, the young rural resident led the rural-urban migration of the 20th century when mechanization reduced the number of workers needed in agriculture.

In this post-industrial period, migration streams continue to show disproportionate numbers of youth. In the U.S. between 1975 and 1978, for instance, migration rates were highest for young people aged 20 to 30 and then dropped to a plateau for persons aged from the mid-fifties to late-sixties before a final tapering off after age 70.[48]

Bogue's observation that older adults tend to migrate to resolve personal and social problems is supported by studies which have found that migration of the elderly stems from retirement, dissolution of a household at the death of a spouse, or a move into an institution.[49]

Sex and race also make a difference in who migrates and how far. Until the post-industrial era and the entry of large numbers of women into the labor force, migration streams contained more men than women, particularly those over long distances. These days women tend to migrate as readily and as far as men do.[50] Within the United States, whites have been more mobile than blacks and Spanish Americans. However, when they *do* move, blacks have been more likely than whites to migrate to more distant areas,[51] as in the great movement of blacks out of the South into the cities of the North and Midwest, particularly after World War I and World War II.

Migrants also tend to come from the upper socioeconomic ranks. Here, education consistently makes the difference. This is probably because the higher his educational attainment, the more likely it is an individual will know about career opportunities and the quality of living in other places. Also the better educated are more likely to be professionals or managers, occupations that usually have national, less localized markets than those open to skilled and semi-skilled workers. Indeed, career mobility for professionals and managers often dictates a long-distance move. However, migrants are relatively less numerous among client-centered professions such as law, dentistry, or medicine where the cost of migration is often too high in terms of replacing an existing panel of clients or patients. Hamilton's classic study of Southern migration using 1960 census data reveals this education selectivity most clearly.[52] Migrants both from and into the South tended to be better educated than nonmigrants regardless of age, sex, or race, and the degree of that selectivity increased with the distance traveled.

To these findings on migration selectivity, Everett Lee has added the influence of the context of migration. He

argues that areas which offer favorable opportunities—those which are advancing industrially—attract migrants who are "positively" selected.[53] By this he means the more privileged migrants, whether measured by education, occupation, or income.

With its expanding industrialization, the Sunbelt offers the nation's workers a wide range of opportunities. If those who respond conform to past experience, we would expect migrants into the Sunbelt to be younger than nonmigrants on average, relatively more often white than black, and better off, better educated, and more likely to be employed in professional and managerial occupations than the general population.

Characteristics of Sunbelt Migrants

Recent data on the characteristics of migrants into the Sunbelt per se will not be available until the 1980 census. The smallest units for which there are suitable interim data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey are the four official regions. However, knowing that recent migration to the South and West is channeled into the Sunbelt states, we may logically conclude that migrants into these two regions are very much like those into the Sunbelt states.

A look at the characteristics of persons who migrated into the South and West between March 1975 and March 1978 compared with those of the total U.S. population reveals several of the expected differences and some unexpected (Table 4, next page).

Migrants to the South and West were younger than would be expected from the total population. The proportion of youth aged 15 to 24 who went West was more than half again as large (28.1 percent) as the proportion in the total population (19.6 percent) and the youth segment moving into the South was almost a fourth larger (22.6 percent). Young adults aged 25 to 34 were also overrepresented in the Southern migrant stream (24.0 percent as compared to 15.1 percent in the total population) and in the Western stream (27.0 percent). This youthfulness was reflected in the median age of migrants to both the South (24.5 years) and the West (25.8 years). Both were more than five years below the median for the total population (31.0 years).

There was little evidence of sex selectivity. The proportion of males in the two migrant streams was only slightly higher than that of the total population (just over 50 percent compared to 48.3 percent). This means, of course, that women are nearly as well represented as men in the South and West migration, as might be expected from recent experience.

Almost no racial selectivity was apparent in either the Southern or Western streams. Each Current Population Sample Survey since 1973 has shown more blacks moving into than out of the South. The increasing size of the black stream into the South since 1970 is, no doubt, reflected in the similarity between the racial composition of the Southern stream and that of the total population in 1978 (89.3 and 86.8 percent white, respectively). The lack of racial selectivity in the Western stream is more difficult to explain. This could indicate an emerging stream of blacks into the Western region.

As expected, migrants were considerably better educated than the general U.S. population. The proportion with upper education in the Southern stream was more than a third greater (45.4 percent) and in the Western stream more than two-thirds greater (52.4 percent) than that of the total population (30.1 percent). They were also more likely to be employed in the more prestigious professional and technical, and managerial and administrative, occupations. However, the differences here were not so great as in education.

The measure of relative 1977 income

Table 4. Characteristics of 1975-78 Migrants to the South and the West Compared with the U.S. 1978 Population

Characteristics	U.S. population	Interregional migrants to	
		South	West
Age			
% under 15	20.4	23.1	19.6
% 15-24	19.6	22.6	28.1
% 25-34	16.1	24.0	27.0
Median age	31.0	24.5	25.8
Sex			
% male	48.3	50.1	50.5
Race			
% white	86.8	89.3	87.8
Education			
% with upper education	30.1	45.4	52.4
% 1-3 years of college	16.1	18.3	21.8
% 4 years of college	8.5	14.0	15.8
% with graduate education	5.5	13.1	14.8
Occupation (males)			
% Professional, technical and kindred occupations	15.2	19.9	21.2
% Managerial and administrative	14.4	16.5	14.7
Relative income, 1977			
% above poverty level	88.7	87.4	85.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1978," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 331, November 1978, Tables 5, 6, 24, 28, and 40.

for the two migrant samples goes against our expectation of higher income levels for migrants into the two regions of the Sunbelt states. Percentages of migrants above poverty level in the stream to the South (87.4 percent) and in that to the West (85.5 percent) were *lower* than for the total U.S. population (88.7 percent). While not large, these differences are certainly contrary from what might be predicted. They could well reflect Larry Long's recent finding that, since about 1975, the historic outflow of the poor from the South has also reversed direction. However, the shift to net in-migration of persons below the officially defined powerty level is due more to a drop in poor out-migrants than an increase in poor in-migrants, according to Long. He also finds that the West has had net in-migration of the poor since 1967.[54]

Except for income, then, recent migrants to the South and West do indeed appear to be "positively" selected. Since the Sunbelt states have captured the major share of the industrial development that has spawned the jobs which, along with the climate and litestyle, have probably been the chief attractions for recent migrants to these two regions, it could well be that data on the characteristics of Sunbelt in-migrants strictly speaking would show still more positive

selection. The proportion of blacks in the migrant streams to the two regions between 1975 and 1978 was in line with recent Census Bureau survey data.

Migration selectivity among the elderly may be even more important than that for migration in general for states like Florida, California, and Arizona where such a large segment of migrants are in the retirement years. The most current set of data on elderly migrants is again that for 1965-70 from the 1970 census. The characteristics of elderly migrants to the Sunbelt may since have changed, but we can see how they compare in general with those of the elderly already living in the Sunbelt. A recent study of these data for persons aged 60 and over found Sunbelt migrants (both into and between Sunbelt states) little different from Sunbelt nonmigrants in age and sex distribution, but there were fewer blacks than might be expected among migrants.[55] Migrants ranked higher on income and education and lived in newer and better quality housing than nonmigrants.

Elderly Sunbelt migrants also proved to be more highly selected than migrants who moved to or within the Snowbelt between 1965 and 1970. They were relatively younger, included more married couples, and again ranked higher on personal income and education and lived in newer, higher quality housing than their counterparts in the Snowbelt.

From Lee's viewpoint of positive migration selection, the Sunbelt states are indeed fortunate in the quality of the newcomers they have received. Except for income level where the evidence is not conclusive, Sunbelt migrants in the mid-1970s were most likely selected from the younger and better qualified segments of the population. Evidence from 1965-70 also suggests that elderly Sunbelt migrants are of higher status than others of their age among both current Sunbelt residents and migrants into and between Snowbelt states. From this alone one might expect the new migration to have had a positive impact on the Sunbelt socioeconomically. But what other effects have the migration of Snowbelt residents to the Sunbelt had on the political, environmental, economic, and cultural dimensions of Sunbelt living?

Consequences of the Sunbelt Migration

Economic consequences

The Sunning of America—the migration to the Sunbelt and its concomitant industrial development—have helped reduce a longtime economic gap. The regions that make up the Sunbelt and the Snowbelt are becoming more alike and sharing the nation's wealth more equally. The Southeast, the Southwest, and the Far West have all increased their shares of the nation's total personal income. At the same time, New England, the mid-Atlantic area, the Great Lakes, and Great Plains states have had decreasing shares. In 1940, for example, the mid-Atlantic states had 30.5 percent of U.S. personal income; the Southeast had 13.2 percent. In 1977, however, the mid-Atlantic figure was down to 21.3 percent while the Southeast's share rose to 19.4 percent.[56] Oklahoma, with accelerated growth after 1970, showed a 63 percent increase in personal income in the next five years—from $8.7 billion in 1970 to $14.2 billion in 1975—while the U.S. increase was 55.6 percent. The state's per capita income rose from about 85 percent of the national average to 89 percent in these five years.

The South as a whole made important income gains during the migration turnaround decade of the 1960s. Its per capita income rose from 79 percent of the national average in 1960 to 86 percent in 1970 and was up to 90 percent by 1976. If this accelerated gain keeps up, Long sees the South's per capita

income reaching 93 percent of the national average by 1980.[57]

Even with this rapid closing of the gap, however, Long notes that in 1977 the South still had more than twice as many people below poverty level as the Northeast—10.4 million, or 15.2 percent of its population, compared to 4.9 million (10.2 percent) in the Northeast. In the West, poor people numbered 4.0 million in 1977, 10.5 percent of the region's population. We cannot be sure until the 1980 census what proportion of that poverty lies in the Sunbelt states. However if Texas is typical, the other 14 Sunbelt states have their share. With a billion dollar surplus in its state treasury at the end of 1977, Texas still had a fifth of its 12.8 million residents surviving at or below the poverty line. The state ranks 39th in per capita expenditure for social welfare.[58] The poor have scarcely profited from Texas' industrial boom.

The rise of the Sunbelt has also lowered unemployment. The jobs added with the industrial expansion in the Sunbelt states which experienced major population growth have dropped unemployment rates in those states below the national average. In March 1977 when national unemployment stood at 6.9 percent, Texas showed the lowest rate with 4.7 percent. Oklahoma (4.8 percent), Arkansas (6.2 percent) and North Carolina (5.2 percent) were also well below the national rate. Other Sunbelt states were still above that average. Mississippi (6.9 percent) and Louisiana (7.6 percent) were somewhat higher. California, still pulling out of its recession of the early 1970s, had about 700,000 people out of work (7.3 percent). Many of the unemployed are hard-core poor, lacking the skills to compete in the open job market. In 1975 more than 4,000 people—most of them black—were interviewed for employment at the Atlanta Urban League. Only 686 were placed in jobs. According to a local official, "The ratio is typical."[59]

The growing economic prosperity of the Sunbelt has laid the foundation for continuing growth and expansion of the industrial sector and, consequently, the population. Peter Morrison describes it this way:

> "Servicing the arriving migrants and temporary residents provides opportunities which induce existing residents to stay and which also entice more newcomers . . . The resulting population, larger and more affluent, enlarges local demand for goods and services, thereby creating new jobs for more migrants."[60]

Lawton, Oklahoma, for example, began the decade dependent upon Ft. Sill for the 6,000 jobs it furnished and a small Haggar slacks plant with 350 jobs. Goodyear moved in during the mid-1970s to add another 1,400 jobs. The Goodyear plant not only added $20 million in payroll but also generated approximately $8 million in retail trade and $7 million in bank deposits each year. Three new retail establishments and approximately 5,000 new people in jobs were brought about by that Goodyear payroll.[61] And other industries will probably follow on the heels of Goodyear.

The expanding economy and growing population of the South, the Southwest, and the Far West—and, no doubt, the Sunbelt, even more—have brought these areas closer to the economic status of the country as a whole, although the poor and the unemployed are still there. With further migration likely as industry and its spinoffs keep on expanding, the prospects for upgrading of these economies looks bright.

Political consequences

Along with changing economies have come changes in the political realm. The Snowbelt migration to the Sunbelt has brought returning Southerners and Northerners alike. Many returning Southerners are politically active and are able to work within existing political structures. They bring back with them some of the new issues of other regions,

particularly environmental concerns. Southern conservatism may soon give way to more liberal viewpoints from the North.[62] The growing numbers of Republican Senators and Representatives are already evidence of some erosion in the sway of the South's Old Guard Democrats: for example, the 1978 defeat in Mississippi of Democrat Maurice Dantin —Senator James O. Eastland's handpicked replacement—by Republican Thad Cochran.

The Sunbelt's rapid population growth at the expense of the Snowbelt will bring about a reapportionment of House of Representative seats, once the 1980 census returns are in, that promises significant changes in the nation's political power structure. As of January 1978, the Census Bureau expected nine House seats to be shifted. Six of these will be added to Sunbelt states: Arizona (1), California (1), Florida (2), and Texas (2). For the first time in history, the South and the West together will hold half the seats in the House (218). Census population projections for 1980 indicate that three or four more seats will shift if current growth trends continue. In that projection, it is likely that Florida will pick up an additional seat.[63]

Another important political consequence of the Sunbelt's rise is a probable shift in the thrust of federal funding from the South to the North. Long believes that once the North-South gap in income is closed Washington will have difficulty "justifying the New Deal programs which helped the region 'bootstrap' its way to a higher economic status."[64] There is some indication that community development programs have been tilted recently to favor older industrial cities of the North.[65]

Awareness of emerging economic and political power in the Sunbelt is accompanied by questions of what "fair share" regions are entitled to. One argument claims that Northern states have paid out more in federal taxes than they

Photo Wm. C. Blizzard/UNIPHOTO

Servicing the migrants arriving to enjoy the Sunbelt's growing prosperity provides opportunities which induce existing residents to stay and which also entice more newcomers.

receive back in services and federal contracts while the Sunbelt enjoys the opposite. A recent study prepared for the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, however, suggests that all U.S. regions are moving closer together in federal taxes paid and spending received. It notes, for example:

"In 1952, the six New England states received only about 78 percent as much in federal expenditures as they paid the federal government in taxes; for the 1974-1976 period, their intake and outgo were almost exactly equal. On the other hand, the 12 Southeastern states, which in 1952 received about 50 percent more in federal funds than they paid out, found that margin reduced to only 11 percent in the latest period."[66]

The irony of the "fair share" argument is that for 40 years the nation has been trying to develop Western resources and bring the South up to parity with the North, and now that it seems to be occurring, "we're wringing our hands over it."[67]

Some are concerned that the debate over federal spending policies will lead to a new sectionalism. However, former Representative Michael J. Harrington, then chairman of the House Northeast-Midwest Economic Advancement Coalition, insisted in 1977 that the "second war between the states" has no credibility among political leaders in Washington or in any Northern state.[68] To pit region against region benefits neither the regions involved nor the nation as a whole; it merely consumes energy which might be devoted to the regional development which will make the question moot.

Consequences to the environment

"Jack Douglas can't go rabbit hunting near his Florence, Alabama, home the way he used to. The fields are now covered with subdivisions. His favorite bass-fishing spot on nearby Wilson Lake is churned by water skiers all summer, and the fish don't bite anymore. The family-owned restaurant where he used to eat fresh-baked pies and spicy barbeque sold out to the Bonanza steak chain last year."[69]

The Sunbelt migration has also left its mark on the landscape. "Progress creates as many scars as it does beauty marks."[70] Rapid growth in metropolitan and many nonmetropolitan counties has pushed back the perimeters of rural leisuretime privilege. Jack Douglas was one victim of a "scar"—urban sprawl in Alabama.

Breakneck growth is overwhelming the capacities of many Sunbelt cities to cope with demands for facilities and services and threats to the environment.

Consider Killeen-Temple, Texas, one of the 15 fastest growing U.S. metropolitan areas between 1970 and 1975 (31.7 percent). The twin cities push out relentlessly as new developments spring up "like dandelions. And development, like dandelions, tends to get out of hand." A ten-year master plan was abandoned soon after its inception. The cities grew beyond the plan's most distant image within five years. Traffic congestion gets worse every year, sewer and water systems are taxed beyond capacity, housing prices are soaring, and suburban sprawl is threatening many small outlying communities.[71]

Or take Houston, Texas, now the country's fifth largest city, where an average 2,000 cars were added each week between 1975 and 1978. Vehicle registrations escalated from 418,293 to 1,771,776 in just three years. The last major freeway construction was in 1973. The one-and-a-half hour rush period of 1975 has now stretched to two-and-a-half hours. Houston planners believe that traffic problems have slowed the growth of office locations. Downtown firms now provide parking permits and fleets of van pools to encourage secretaries to continue on the job. Of even greater concern is air pollution. Houston is aware that, unless auto exhaust emissions are reduced, federal officials

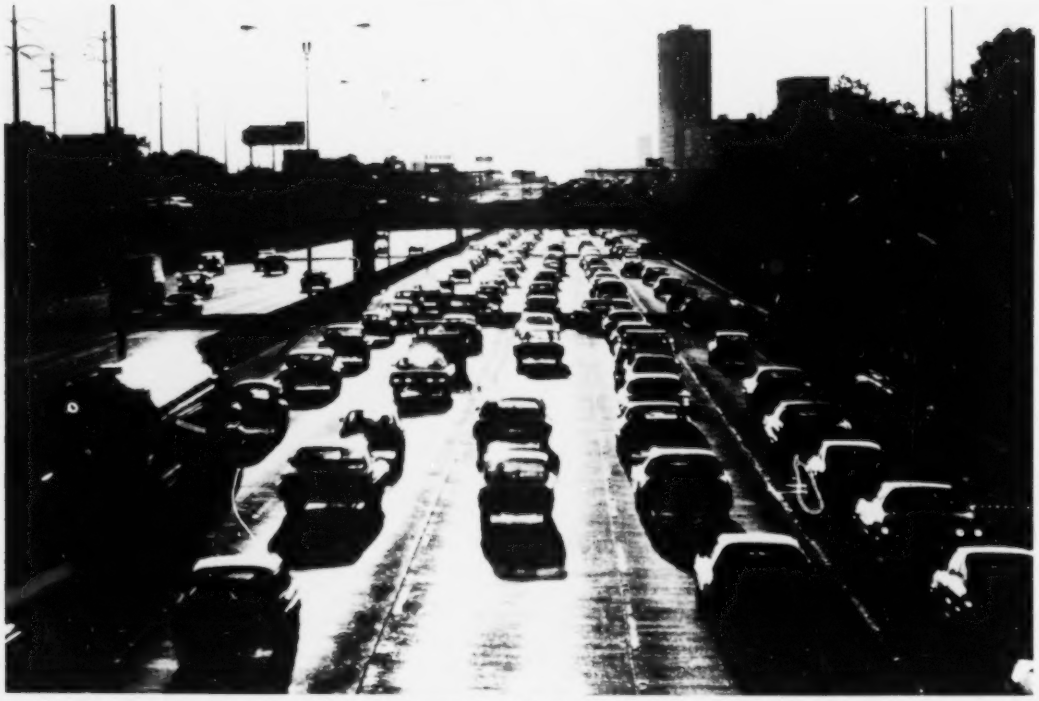


Photo: Michael von Helms/UNIPHOTO

Breakneck population growth added 2,000 cars a week to the freeways of Houston, Texas, between 1975 and 1978.

will insist that new refineries and petrochemical plants locate elsewhere (and take their jobs with them).[72] Traffic congestion in Atlanta has forced a plan to widen some four-lane expressways to ten lanes. Rapid growth in Fort Worth has inflated the housing market so that a $30,000 house of the early 1970s now sells for $50,000.

Added to the problems of rapid growth, where meticulous long-range planning yields to crisis bandaid strategies, are the problems of the distribution of people and industry within metropolitan areas. In the past, Sunbelt cities of the South were typically commercial, with service hinterlands tucked close in to city boundaries. Rich and poor, black and white lived in close proximity in residential areas surrounding the business center. Even in the 1960s, Southern metropolitan areas showed lower levels of socioeconomic and racial housing segregation than metropolitan areas of other regions.[73]

By 1970, however, segregation between the central city and the suburbs was well under way. Suburbs attracted more of the new white in-migrants than central cities did and white middle class households began moving from central cities to the suburbs. Between 1960 and 1970, the percent of white population living in Southern central cities declined 25 percent; the black central city population increased about 1 percent.[74] Since 1970, the decline in the South's central city population has averaged an annual 6,000 persons. Many of these are moving to the predominantly white suburbs outside city boundaries. In 1977, the demolition of city housing outpaced new construction. Atlanta's central city now contains almost three-fourths (72 percent) of the black residents of the seven-county metropolitan area.[75]

The central city-suburban imbalance of blacks may now be changing. Census Bureau data show that between 1975 and 1977 black moves into sub-

urbs around the country accounted for 14 percent of the net suburban growth due to migration, compared with just 7 percent between 1970 and 1975. Further, suburban blacks increased by 34 percent over the first seven years of the decade, although they still make up only 6 percent of total suburban population.[76] While these are national trends, it is likely that they represent patterns in Sunbelt cities as well.

Industry has followed the shift of more privileged ranks of population to the perimeter of Southern metropolitan areas. A recent study of industrial growth in the Fort Worth-Dallas area illustrates this trend. Established firms entering the area now locate their branch plants in the suburbs and nonmetropolitan areas adjacent to the suburbs more often than in the two central cities. New firms tend to locate within the cities but are expected to join the trek to the suburbs as they become established and can furnish their own support services. Typically, as soon as new firms have established production records, they are lost to the two central cities' tax base.[77]

Because most Sunbelt migrants to metropolitan areas choose the suburbs, commercial and retail activities have suburbanized as well. Recent new office space has been constructed primarily in suburban areas of both the South and the North.[78] The Sunbelt shopping center has also followed the population deconcentration, as in other areas, fed by new beltways around and through the city proper.

The growth of Sunbelt metropolitan areas in the last two decades has focused on suburbs and close-in nonmetropolitan counties. If this growth continues to attract the better off and better educated from among both Sunbelt in-migrants and existing central city populations, the once less-segregated Sunbelt cities may soon develop the pattern of the poor black hole within the surrounding affluent white doughnut now typical of deteriorating cities of the North.

One Southern economist, Frank Breckenfeld, claims that Atlanta and New Orleans already exhibit the symptoms of doughnut cities. Atlanta, which now has a majority of blacks in the central city, finds itself with a "glut [perhaps temporary] of new hotel space, vacant offices, condominiums and apartments." New Orleans has experienced decline for two decades despite the fact that it has a "flourishing tourist trade and the nation's second busiest port [after New York]." New Orleans' large number of unskilled workers has inflated the ranks of discouraged workers—those who want to work but have given up looking for a job.[79]

What are the implications of this growth pattern for Sunbelt cities?

The loss of upper income families means a loss of wealth and a shrinking tax base for the central city as does the flight of industrial, commercial, and retail establishments. Meanwhile, the concentration of low-income disadvantaged population in the central city calls for larger outlays for police protection against victimization and fire protection against the hazards of vulnerable, dilapidated housing. Thus suburbanization of Sunbelt metropolitan areas means rising costs of central city services at the same time that the central city tax base is shrinking.

The doughnut pattern is also expensive in terms of energy. Longer trips to work and to the central city for services put undue burdens on energy supply. The automotive age has caught up with the Sunbelt along with Snowbelt growth patterns. Current consumption patterns give no indication that increasing the cost of energy reduces the amount used by the American driver. The surge of nonmetropolitan growth may tax natural energy sources even more than the suburbanization of the past two decades.

Finally, whether in the central city, the suburb, or nonmetropolitan areas of the Sunbelt states, the arrival of large

Photo Bell & Stanton, Inc., Atlanta

Atlanta, Georgia, has mushroomed along with the Sunbelt boom but now exhibits the possible symptoms of a "doughnut" city, with a black majority in the central city surrounded by affluent white suburbs.

numbers of elderly migrants means that retirement communities will soon place additional demands upon the recreational, social, and medical services of Sunbelt cities. Even though these migrants appear to be drawn from the more privileged of the nation's elderly, they will inevitably need more support services as they age. Thus, while the short-range impact of their arrival has been a healthy boom in retail and housing sales, the long-range impact will be a strain on the communities to which they have moved.

The Sunning of America

The Sunbelt has indeed become a major destination for migrants within the United States. This is true for migrants of all ages, but especially for the elderly. Three Sunbelt states attract particularly large flows of migrants over long distances from Snowbelt states spread across the nation: California, Arizona, and Florida. Five others are the focus of heavy in-migration from areas nearer by: Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Virginia. Because these migrants in general and the elderly among them are better qualified and more privileged than average, the socioeconomic characteristics of the Sunbelt population as a whole are now nearly up to national averages.

This growth and development has been a mixed blessing, however. Equalization of the regions has raised questions of possible new sectionalism. Now that the Sunbelt has risen, Northern mayors are asking, "Will the Snowbelt rise again?" Competition for federal dollars may pit region against region, to the disadvantage of all. Current growth in the Sunbelt may bring other problems. Suburbanization of industry and population has segregated the rich and the

poor so that central cities in the South may soon face the many problems now stultifying the decaying cities of the North. The Sunbelt may also soon be confronted with increased demands for services for the very old as the growing numbers of retirees age still further.

The outlook for the Sunbelt's future depends to a large degree on whether or not public planners will heed the signals of emerging problems in time to avoid the pitfalls of laissez-faire growth. It would be irony indeed if the Sunbelt after 40 years of struggle to overcome its dependent status should "sow the seeds of its own decay in its traditional conservative reluctance for active government to provide mass transit, better schools, better city planning, more services to concentrations of minority groups."[80]

After almost a decade of record growth, there is some indication that in-migration has slowed in several Sunbelt states. In 1977, Florida's annual growth dropped to about a third of what it was earlier in the decade. Arizona's growth rate of about 5 percent a year until 1975 slowed to about 2 percent in the following two years. On the other hand, growth rates increased in Texas and Oklahoma. And Louisiana—the last Sunbelt state to achieve net in-migration—finally did so in 1977. California, whose growth tapered off in the early 1970s, appeared to be growing at a faster rate after 1975.[81]

The most recent Census Bureau projections (which assume continuation of 1970 fertility and mortality levels and interstate migration rates of the 1970 to 1975 period), estimate that the population of the 15 Sunbelt states will reach nearly 90 million by 1980, or 39.9 percent of the total U.S. population—up from 85 million, although about the same percentage share as in 1970. By the year 2000, if the growth pattern of the 1970s continues, the Sunbelt will reach 112 million and will comprise 43.2 percent of the nation's population. The South and West combined will have almost 150 million residents and account for well over half (56 percent) of the U.S. population.

As long as this growth continues, the Sunbelt will, no doubt, continue to prosper. The challenge for planners is to direct that growth in such a way that the Sunbelt states can continue to provide the quality of living which the new migrants seek to enjoy. □

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